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## Aids to Bible Readers.

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### THE FORESHADOWINGS OF THE CHRIST. II.

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*Historical progress from Moses to David.—The Monarchy the great achievement.—David and Solomon.—I. The Davidic Promises and Hopes.—II. The Monarchy glorified in Song:—Aspects of the psalm literature;—The Foreshadowings;—(1) Jehovah's relation to the monarchy;—(2) Position and Prospects of the King;—(3) Future of the Nation under the Monarchy.—III. Larger Ideals.—Summary.*

#### III. FORESHADOWINGS FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM.

THE book of Judges contains the oldest memorials of the struggle of the newly formed nation for possession of the promised land and for unity and organization. It was not so very long a contest, but its intensity was proportioned to the important principles that were at stake. The Mosaic constitution, only partially apprehended by the people at large, came face to face with the attractive but less fruitful and lofty elements of the Canaanitish faith and life. The victory was first in the sphere of religion, though not without concessions on the part of the victors. The steady advance towards unity of political organization was assisted by the victory of Jehovah over Baal.

The outcome of the age was the establishment of the monarchy. The earliest accounts in the book of Samuel have preserved the record of the gladness with which the nation hailed this consummation, while at the same time traces remain of the doubt and questioning, if not opposition, with which this step was met by some who were most loyal to Jehovah. Samuel stands as the central figure, the patriotic leader, the founder of the true Jehovah prophets, the mediator of the transition to the new monarchy. Saul, the first king, failed to realize the meaning of his exaltation, handicapped, perhaps, by external circumstances and his imperfect religious training, as well as by his own weaknesses of nature and character. With David and Solomon the monarchy advanced rapidly to a position of considerable power and

influence. External circumstances in their days were favorable. Great nations round about them, Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, were in a state of decline. No power stood forth in western Asia at this critical period to oppose Israel. The nation now, as never before, realized its unity and its opportunity. Both religion and politics were animated by high aspirations. The two great kings themselves possessed remarkable characteristics of mind. David was the born leader, the attractive, lovable hero who knew how to bind men to himself and use them in the accomplishment of his wide-reaching designs; frank, impetuous, fervently religious, yet easily led away by passion, a heroic character such as Israel had never before produced. Solomon, on the other hand, building upon the foundation of David, was a typical oriental monarch. He brought the nation into the great current of world history. Developing commerce and trade, he filled the land with wealth, and organized into a firm structure the elements which David had attached to himself. At the same time he had the weaknesses of an eastern despot, and these have been recorded for us along with his more creditable achievements.

Both kings were prominent in the worship of Jehovah. What David planned when he brought the ark to Jerusalem, the city which he had already made his political capital, Solomon carried out by the building of a temple which constituted the religious rallying place of the people, and which preserved, in their purest form, the rites and worship of the nation.

Thus the period constitutes a brilliant epoch in the history of Israel. The nation comes of age. New life and light enter on every hand. Realizations of much that was hitherto merely germinant in the social and religious organization appear. Hence the material for the religious thinkers of later days, for the exercise of the prophetic insight of the following epochs, is abundant, and offers much that is central and vital for Israel's religion. Here is a vast field for religious contemplation and inspiration, opened to both prophet and priest, from which to rise to larger and higher anticipations. Prophetic and priestly histories dwell upon the times of David and Solomon with peculiar relish. The elements that center in or about the monarchy afford to them unceasing subjects for teaching and hope. Poetry comes with its garland of praise, with its deep insight, to the interpretation and glorification of the kingdom. The psalm literature whose themes are taken from this field is abundant and important. All the material, with the exception, perhaps, of one or two passages, may be

studied, indeed, from this one point of view—the monarchy and its promise.

I. *The Davidic promises and hopes.*—2 Samuel 7:11-16; Psalm 18:43-50; 2 Samuel 23:1-7. These three passages gather about the person of the great king himself. They contain the prophetic view of his own consciousness and that of his age as to the character and destiny of his royal line. The connection between David and Jehovah was so close and intimate, the fidelity of the monarch to his God was so marked, and the consequent justice, peace and prosperity of his reign were so evident, that all constituted a pledge for the future which could not but be cherished. The monarchy now established would be permanent. The family now occupying it would be continued there. The prophet could not overlook the manifest defects of David's reign and those of his successors. He as well as they would suffer punishment, which for them would be chastisement coming through the disasters and difficulties besetting the state. It was nevertheless impossible that the divine mercy should not rule more permanently and potently than the wrath. The Davidic line absorbs into itself, in the ideal picture, the life of the state and the religion. It represents all that is vital and energizing in the body politic; it is the source of power and blessing. It is the object and channel of Jehovah's favor. Nothing higher appears in the prophet's vision. The future, therefore, is secure to it and in its hands. The seer beholds all this prospect unfolding before David himself who is assured an everlasting future of ultimate triumph in the house which, under Jehovah's favor, he is now to establish.

II. *The monarchy glorified in song.*—Psalms 2; 24; 45; 72; 110; 1 Samuel 2:1-10. When we consider these psalms from the point of view which we have chosen, viz., the historical, it is seen that some important modifications must be made in the ordinary conception of them.

(1) They are inspired by definite historical situations belonging to the singer's own time. It is by no means easy in the case of all these psalms to determine this historical situation, and in the case of some quite impossible. This is not strange, since it is the function of poetry to generalize incidents, facts, and persons, and to see particulars in the light of more general principles. Thus the king, in whose honor these hymns are sung, may have been David or some one of his descendants upon the throne, in connection with whom the bard felt that the glorious anticipations and hopes that filled his heart might be realized.

An excellent example of this is found in the forty-fifth psalm, probably a marriage hymn sung in honor of one of these kings, in which the joyful occasion is made the vehicle for a series of magnificent and far-reaching pictures. Scholars have differed as to which king was meant. Some have thought of the marriage of Solomon with the princess of Egypt; others of the marriage of Joram with Athaliah. The historical references in the poem are too indefinite to permit a categorical conclusion on these points.

The second psalm is still less susceptible of reference to an exact historical occasion. The situation is that of the Israelitish king ruling over a vast territory, against whom his tributaries are planning to rise in rebellion, but whose authority over them is assured and proclaimed by Jehovah himself. Here again the situation would not be unsuitable to Solomon or to David, but positive assertion is impossible.

Psalm 72 is reasonably assigned to the reign of Solomon. Psalm 24 seems appropriate to David's bringing of the ark to Mt. Zion, and has been thought by some to picture the very occasion of the procession and its entrance into the Holy City. Psalm 16 may be said to describe the faith of the king rising above the trials of sickness and the fear of death. The song of Hannah is fixed in its reference to the royal line by its mention, in the tenth verse, of "his anointed."

Thus each of these psalms rests on a solid background of historical life, and it is only the method of the writer and our ignorance of the time in which he wrote that prevent us from determining the exact details of the historical situation.

(2) It is of course evident to everyone who has paid any attention to the subject that the Davidic authorship of the book of Psalms cannot be sustained. Such a psalm as the second, for example, is made up of four parts, the fourth part, vss. 10-12, summing up the whole, being undoubtedly written not by a king but by some one who admonishes the rebels to make their peace with the king. Verses 7-9 are dramatically put into the mouth of the king, just as vs. 6 is put into the mouth of Jehovah. Psalm 110, whatever may be the application that later prophets have given to it, was evidently written by a prophet concerning a king, for it begins, "Jehovah said unto my lord," *i.e.* "king." It is now quite generally recognized that while David was the "sweet singer of Israel" and wrote psalms, the majority of the poems of the psalter are not from his hand.

(3) It is involved in this point of view that the psalmists have not

in mind the historical Jesus. To them the anointed, the Messiah, of whom they sing is a personage within their own ken and time, from whose achievements and in whose career they expect to be realized the wondrous anticipations which they describe. It is precisely because their anticipations at this definite point and in this limited application were not realized, that we can speak of Messianic elements or "fore-shadowings" in connection with them.

The important and central topics with which these psalms deal may be summed up under three heads: (1) Jehovah's relation to the monarchy. (2) The position and prospects of the king. (3) The future of the nation under the monarchy.

1. *Jehovah's relation to the monarchy.*—The righteous character and deeds of Jehovah are recognized as lying at the basis of the kingdom. The song of Hannah (1 Sam. 2:1-10) is one long glorification of Jehovah's justice. He rights wrongs. The poor and the needy are restored to their proper position. The haughty are bowed down; the arrogant are humbled. The wicked are silenced. Jehovah is the Lord of righteousness in all the earth "*to the end that* he may strengthen his king and exalt the power of his anointed." Similar passages are found in Psalm 45:7, where it is the uprightness of the king that has secured for him the favor of Jehovah, and in Psalm 72:1 where the king as the representative of Jehovah is to be clothed with divine justice that he may thus rule uprightly and forever.

Jehovah is at the same time the king's helper in war (Psalm 110:5). His mercy is enduring toward the monarchy (Psalm 18:50). He has established the kingdom by his divine decree so that it shall not be removed (Psalm 2:6-8). He rules over all the earth and thus prepares the way for the universal sway of his anointed (1 Sam. 2:10; Psalm 24:1-2). In the latter psalm he is also represented as coming into the city which is at the same time the political center and capital of the kingdom, to dwell in his holy place.

2. *The position and prospects of the King.*—The king is a victorious warrior whose campaigns are carried on in all the earth and are everywhere successful (Psalms 45:4, 5; 72:9; 110:6, 7; 2:8, 9). As king he is the favorite of Jehovah. The monarchy is of God's own creation, and to this he himself testifies publicly. The occupant is declared to be his Son (Psalm 2:6, 7). He sits at the right hand of Jehovah (Psalm 110:1), and in his warlike expeditions Jehovah moves at his right hand to punish his enemies (110:5). The interpretation of Psalm

45 : 6 is not easy, but in view of the representations which have just been given, it is not unlikely that the intimate and close relation between Jehovah and the king is likewise referred to. The occupant of the throne is even called God himself. Or, if that seems too hyperbolical, his throne is denominated a divine throne, divine in its character or its permanence (*cf.* R. V. margin).

The righteous character of the monarchy is a fundamental trait in it. Reference has already been made to this in the preceding paragraphs. The king sits upon the holy hill of Zion, and he rules in justice and mercy over all his subjects (Psalm 45 : 4, 6, 7 ; 72 : 2, 4) and in this righteousness he appears a merciful deliverer to those who need deliverance, and about him gather the prayers and praises of those whom he has thus blessed (72 : 12–15). Being thus in intimate relation with Jehovah, there is ascribed to him also union with the priestly element of the nation. To this aspect of his position the priestly writers refer with special interest. In 1 Samuel 2 : 35 a later narrator describes the overthrow of the unworthy house of Eli, and the substitution in its place of a faithful priesthood who “shall walk before my anointed forever.” The “anointed” is evidently the royal line. The prospect before the mind of the writer is, therefore, the existence of a priesthood which shall be in intimate relation to the king. But the king himself is to possess a priestly character (Psalm 110). His army consists of a body of warriors clad in holy garments. He himself is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. The reference to Melchizedek of course connects itself with the fourteenth chapter of Genesis where he is represented as both king and priest. The Israelitish king is to continue in the same line of succession in the same royal city. He is to unite the offices of king and priest, blessing in the name of Jehovah and receiving tithes. The war in which he engages with his followers is a holy war. He sits upon the “holy hill of Zion” (Psalm 2 : 6). Striking terms are used to indicate the duration of the monarchy. It is to be forever (110 : 4); as long as the sun (72 : 17). The royal line is to endure unto all generations, forever and ever (45 : 16, 17).

3. *The future of the nation under the monarchy.*—Its material development is to be unparalleled. The ground is to yield abundantly, even to the tops of the mountains. The population is to be like the grass of the earth (Psalm 72 : 16). The people are utterly devoted to their king. The flower of the youth offer themselves to his service (Psalm 110 : 3). The nation under the leadership of its king shall extend its

sway over all the earth, and from the ends of the world tribute shall be received (Psalm 72:8-11). The king's armies shall go to and fro in the earth, beating down wickedness (Psalm 110:6). In the second psalm the universal sway is represented as already an accomplished fact. When a rebellion against this authority is threatened, with all the greater force the poet emphasizes the fact that such a rebellion is worse than useless since the king upon Zion has been divinely determined as universal monarch. Let all peoples, therefore, hasten to make their peace with him (Psalm 2:7-12). And as thus dominating over the affairs of the world the monarchy will bring in the reign of peace till the moon be no more (Psalm 72:7). This authority will be gained also through friendly union with the surrounding peoples. In the marriage of the king with a foreign princess the poet beheld the promise of this unlimited sway (Psalm 45:9-17).

III. *Larger ideals*.—Two psalms assigned to this period have no direct connection with the ideas that appear in the royal psalms. They seem to be concerned with more general conceptions. Psalm 8 reminds us of the magnificent outlook of the first chapter of Genesis. The wonderful contrasts in man are dwelt upon, his insignificance and his magnificence, his greatness and his littleness. It is in the picture of his wondrous exaltation that the poet finds inspiration for his lofty flight. Created by Jehovah, to all else than God he is superior. To God alone he yields, and to him he is but a little inferior. All the majesty and glory and greatness of one who is but just a step below the mighty one gather about him. Such is man in his ideal state as the creation of Jehovah.

From what threatens to be his deathbed another singer—it may be David himself—utters words of supreme faith and calm assurance. He has been faithful to Jehovah in life and has chosen those who were like minded. Prosperity has attended him, and therefore the future is bright. The realm of the dead is not to be his dwelling place. He by whom Jehovah stands is to be restored to life. The expressions are so general and indefinite that it is difficult to say whether the psalmist declares that though he enter the gates of death he shall not abide there, but shall pass triumphantly through the realm of Sheol unto Jehovah, or merely that the disease shall not prove fatal. He is, however, assured that to have God at one's right hand is to abide at his right hand forever hereafter. Here is the kernel of the psalm—the permanence of Jehovah's servant.



In summing up the study of this period, consideration should be given to the following suggestions:

(a) It cannot be too steadily kept in mind that there is no evidence in this material that the references are to any other than *historical persons*, and, for the most part, to particular kings, though we are unable to determine precisely the exact reference in each case. The message that the prophet brings is intended for his own time primarily. The hopes gather about the persons of these kings. We may realize from this point of view what elements of blessing were felt by the nation to center in the monarchy, especially with what ardent affection the people regarded David, that these wide-reaching hopes settled themselves upon members of the Davidic house. The condition of anarchy and hopelessness out of which the monarchy lifted the people and the height of security and prosperity to which the nation attained under it are therein amply illustrated. No wonder, then, that to this house exaltation and permanence were attached.

(b) But this lofty anticipation in joining itself to successive members of the Davidic line was constantly failing of realization. Solomon did not become the Messiah expected, and king after king passed away with the future still concealing the expected blessing. Yet ever the disappointed hope renews its youth and clothes a new figure in the brightness which has faded from the present. The monarchy itself as an institution realized in the Davidic house was felt to be *a permanent institution of blessing*. No doubt is felt that the light is to break from that source. The qualities of true kingship are to realize themselves in it. No nation of antiquity possessed so high an ideal of kingship, so wonderful a conception of the essential duties and characteristics of monarchy as did Israel. The student should ponder carefully this conception, in its various elements, its demand for justice, mercy, righteousness and peace.

(c) When we ask ourselves the *source of this appreciation* of monarchy in Israel we uncover again the essential foundation of Israel's life exhibited here in a somewhat more definite form. The living, active, energizing Jehovah is the life, the center and the soul of these ideals of monarchy. As in the preceding period the prophets saw him as the founder and leader of the nation, its lawgiver and judge, so now they behold in him the ideal king from whom all kingship derives, who gives authority to Israel's royal line. In this period the conception of Jehovah as king attains fulness and color. The monarchy, regarded as established by him, reflects back upon him something of its definite-

ness and beneficence. His sovereignty is emphasized. The quality of righteousness, revealed to Moses as essential and central in his character, now clothes his kingship and from him, as king, passes to his earthly representative and son, the king in Israel. Hence the glorious picture of monarchy in Israel; hence the undying hope of its beneficent sway over all the nations of the earth throughout all time.

(*d*) It is now possible from this point of view to discern *the fore-shadowings of this period*. Its eternal background is the prophetic faith in Jehovah as the lord of all, the eternal, righteous ruler. Its center is the Davidic monarchy, the single figures of which, clothed in all the idealization of the prophet's inspired expectation and the singer's insight appear and pass away, leaving the realization still unrealized, the ideal abiding. David and Solomon and all their line were gone, but the image and expectation of what they might have been, of what the monarchy could attain, outlived them and became the heritage of the future.